

Assomptione















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ASSOMPTIONE  
DELLA MADONNA.







To Mr. Oppenheimer  
from J. S. S. -  
13. VII. 09

# ASSOMPTIONE DELLA MADONNA.



A HISTORICO-CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF THE PICTURE

## “ASSOMPTIONE DELLA MADONNA”

FORMERLY THE PROPERTY OF THE HOUSE OF ESTE, DUKES OF FERRARA AND MODENA.

BY

CASPAR BADRUTT

ST. MORITZ, ENGADINE, SWITZERLAND.

TRANSLATED BY H. O. D. D.



HOFER & BURGER, ZURICH.

1895.









**APHAEL!** — “At the mere whisper of this magic name our whole being seems

spell-bound. Wonder, delight, and awe, take possession of our souls, and throw us into a whirl of contending emotions. Of the cause it is hard to give a sufficient analysis. The marvel is that while Raphael puts this thralldom upon us, he remains, as a man, almost a stranger. We know less of him than of Donatello, Michelangelo, Ghirlandajo, or da Vinci. What we

feel in regard to him is not due to any sufficient acquaintance with his person, the details of his daily life or the vicissitudes of his career, but to a conviction that he who could produce such masterpieces must have been a man of uncommon mould, who infused into his creations not only his own but that universal spirit which touches each spectator as if it were stirring a part of his own being. He becomes familiar and an object of fondness to us because he moves by turns every fibre of our hearts. We are with him in his placid mood when the perfect sweetness and purity of his feeling imparts to us a sense of absolute harmony. We delight in the calm which rests on the brow of his Madonnas, the sublime love which he displays in their face



and action, the innocence and joy which beam in the faces of his infants. We feel that an artist who can combine such charms of shape and line with such loveliness of colour is gifted beyond expression. We seem to watch the working of his mind when composing those marvellous altarpieces in which devotion is so pure as to lift the worshippers above the sphere of humanity. We bow to him when he transfigures the Virgin into something akin to the heavenly. His passion when he depicts the grief of the Apostles and Mary, the subtleness of his thought, his inward grasp and potent delineation of all the motives which actuate and explain action, his versatility of means, and his power of rendering, are all so varied and so true, they speak so straight-forwardly to us, that we are always in commune with him."

With these inspired words Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle introduce the reader to their famous "Life and Works of Raphael."





THE life and work of the great genius of the Renaissance are even at the present day a mystery to us. Centuries have elapsed: yet we gaze in astonishment at the countless works of art which his genius conceived and his master hand executed. The originality of his creative power is specially manifested in the magical grace and charm of his representations of the Virgin: in vain do we seek them in the works of other masters, whether of earlier or later date; they serve as undisputed models for all time. Above all one masterpiece holds us enchained; the so-called Madonna di San Sisto, in which the Divine Mother appears before us as a heavenly vision.

One of the most pre-eminent modern writers on art, the late **Wilhelm Lübke** gives us in his "Grundriss zur Kunstgeschichte" (Outlines of the History of Art) the following description of this magnificent work of Raphael.

"Raphael's sublimest realisation, however, is the **Sistine Madonna**: which was " painted about 1518 for the church of San Sisto in Piacenza, and is now the most " treasured masterpiece in the Royal Gallery at Dresden. Every one knows that " wondrous figure, clothed in rich drapery, which floats before us on the clouds like " a heavenly vision, surrounded with a glory of lovely angel heads! A veil falls in " sweeping folds from her head: she seems lost in deep thought, pondering over the " Divine Mystery which her hands with motherly tenderness encircle. Her arms form " a throne for a Man-child, on whose baby-face is stamped the sublimity of His mission, " and in whose fixed and penetrating eyes may be read the presage of the salvation " He is destined to bring to the world. Pope Sixtus gazes reverently upwards: his " grand dignified figure forms a harmonious contrast to that of Sta. Barbara on the " other side, who bows her graceful head in an attitude of deep humility, with eyes " downcast before the majesty above. Two lovely boy-angels, leaning on a parapet " below, complete this splendid work. In this incomparable creation it seems to have " been Raphael's design to combine his holiest thoughts and heavenward aspirations " with his conception of the most perfect beauty of form; for it must ever remain as " now the greatest triumph of religious art. His Madonnas, and above all the Sistine " Madonna, are not created for one particular epoch or one special phase of religious " thought. They live for all times and all peoples, because they portray in imperishable " form an eternal truth."





*A lieux et temps!\*)*

At the risk of drawing down upon myself, from many historians and connoisseurs of art, the charge of ignorance and self-seeking, I nevertheless venture to introduce for the first time to a wider public the best reproduction I can procure of the

## ASSOMPTIONE DELLA MADONNA

(see photogravure)

formerly the property of the house of Este, dukes of Ferrara and Modena: and to indicate the history of the picture, so far as I have been able to authenticate it. In this task I am compelled to touch upon the history of the picture known as the

## SISTINE MADONNA

(see photogravure)

and the picture itself, which is now in the Royal Picture Gallery at Dresden. More than six years ago my late father, Mr. Johann Badrutt, proprietor of the Engadiner-Kulm at St. Moritz, became the possessor of the “**Assomptione della Madonna**” which was then in a very neglected condition. He had for more than four years been negotiating the purchase with the previous owner, Signora Elisa Bertoni, of Reggio, in the Emilia. Till 1882 the picture was kept by her relations in Modena, in the Palazzo Pentetorre, the house formerly occupied by the steward of the Este domain: the mark it left on the staircase wall can still be identified.

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\*) Motto of Alfonso I since the battle of Ravenna 1512.



The picture, which had, as I imagine, been carried on April 11th. 1513 by **Alfonso I**, Duke of Ferrara, in the Coronation procession of Pope Leo X as "Banner of the Holy Roman Church" (Gonfalone della S. R. Chiesa) (Giovio, Cancelliere, solenni possessi pag. 69 &c. &c.) was brought to Ferrara and hung in the ducal chapel (Capella in Corte) as an altarpiece (Ancona or Cona; the terms are synonymous). It is quite possible that the "Ancona" may have been erected as such by the famous **Lucretia Borgia** then Duchess of Ferrara.

It may be the same picture that is named in the "Inventario della Guardaroba Ducale Estense" 1561, vide Campori Raccolta &c. 1870, page 39: **Assomptione della Madonna in uno quadro dorato**" (in a gilt frame). At this point I may mention that with a single exception all the pictures are introduced with such words as "uno" "diverse" and other vague indications: the name of the painter is never given. Again we find in a publication of A. Venturi: "Libro di debitore segnata B. della munizione delle fabbriche 1586—1596 R. Archivio di Stato Modena in Archivio dell' Arte I pag. 425, 426: "M. Bastian di Filippi pitore . . . lui ha fatto in la Capeletta della Ser<sup>ma</sup> Duchessa di Ferrara in Corte prencipiatj sino dello anno 1586 . . . e per avere conzato quadri No. 23 postj in detta gesiola, dove vi e zunta e istuchati e altrj accomodamentj di Colorj a olio . . . nella S<sup>da</sup> facciata verso il cortile uno quadro de la Sensione de la Madonna de M. Gerolamo da Carpi . . ." which may be literally translated "In the year 1586 in the little chapel of Her Serene Highness the Duchess of Ferrara within the castle, Master Bastian Filippi (also called Bastianino, a well-known painter of Ferrara) took in hand and completed 23 pictures, which are placed in the little church above-named, and other improvements in oil paint . . . in the second façade opposite the Court yard a painting of the Ascension of the Madonna by Master Gerolamo di Carpi (born 1501, died 1556)". Guarini in his *Compendio delle Chiese &c. di Ferrara* 1621 page 190 sqq. describes the foundation of the royal chapel in the court yard in 1476 and its use in his own time: furthermore, he states that between 1558 and 1597 Alfonso II spent a large sum on its restoration: the *Genealogia Estense di Maria Equicola* to the same effect. As the court of Este had to move to Modena in 1598, a chapel was subsequently erected in the Castle: and being thus in a private place, the Assomptione remained accessible to few and not often inspected. At the end of the last century this chapel also was demolished, and its contents, like many other treasures, scattered over the world. Pagani, on page 198 of *Pitture e Scolture di Modena*, 1770, writing about the Capella Ducale, says: "nel primo Altare ornato di Collonne e frigio di antichi marmi che serrano l'ancona o sia grand quadro evvi dipinta l'Assunta di Maria Vergine, pensiero del celebratissimo Guido Reni ese-



guito di uno della sua scuola." [At the first altar which is decorated with columns and a frieze of antique marble, surrounding the "Ancona" (or large devotional picture), which represents the Ascension of the Virgin Mary: a conception of the famous Guido Reni, executed by one of his school]. Pagani, who usually copied from Gherardi (M. S. 1745) cannot have possessed much instinct for Art, and his suggestion of Guido as the painter has not much to recommend it. (Venturi Galleria Estense pag. 9.) According to tradition, the picture came into the possession of certain retainers of the ducal family, who afterwards became stewards of the Pentetorre property in Modena. Their names were Pietro, Giovan Batista, and again Pietro Baraldi. This family had been in the service of the house of Este since 1752. Pietro Baraldi wrote in his "Memoria l'anno 1841": "L'ancona di comune ragione della famiglia Baraldi dimostrante l'immagine dell' Assunta esistente tutt' ora nella parete del penultimo ripiano della scala dell' abitazione di detta famiglia è tutta di un pezzo, dipinto sul gesso, copia fatta al tempo di Raffaello stesso perchè l' approvano la freschezza, il dipinto a color grasso e daper tutto oltremare N. B. che detta Ancona è di provenienza Estense e che è stata stimata cento trenta Luigi dico — 130 del fratello del segretario di Gabinetto di S. A. R. Padrone Signor Gamorra intelligentissimo di quadri, prevenendo però detto Sigr. Gamorra il sottoscritto di adattarsi ragionevolmente nel caso di vendita (sig.) Pietro Baraldi". [Memoria anno 1841: The altarpiece representing the Ascension, the property of the Baraldi family collectively, which is at present on the wall above the second landing of the staircase in the dwelling house of that family, is all in one piece (*i.e.* the canvas) painted on gesso: a copy made in Raphael's lifetime, as is shown by the rich and vivid colouring, and in particular the ultramarine. N. B. The "Ancona" as it is called was originally the property of the Este family: and was valued at 130 louis d'or by an art expert, Signor Gamorra, brother to the private secretary of His Serene Highness: who at the same time recommended the undersigned to content himself with a reasonable price in the event of a sale. Signed, Pietro Baraldi.]

This art-expert Gamorra also seems to have frequently erred in his judgments as to the authorship of pictures. (Venturi Galleria p. 429.) By the way, he did some traffic in pictures to and from Rome, which no doubt accounts for the "friendly" piece of advice at the end.

Seven years ago the „**Assomptione**” “Assunta” or “Sensione” was sent to Herr A. Sesar in Augsburg to be cleaned and restored. At this time we did not know its previous history, and unfortunately had not submitted it to the inspection of other art critics and experts. Herr Sesar stretched the picture on new canvas, cleaned it, and removed the uppermost layer of paint, due presumably to Bastian Filippi 1586—88,



which covered the robe and the lower part of the picture; filled up the wide rents in the Madonna's drapery, and enlarged the picture upwards, downwards (both arms of the angel on the right) and sideways. As to the value of his work opinions may differ: greater connoisseurs than myself have pronounced in its favour. Anyhow, the heads have not been "restored."

The size of the present picture is 268/198 cm (i.e. approximately 8 feet 9½ inches by 6 feet 5 inches). It was painted on strong linen damask, without seams; a drawing of the pattern is given on page 22. Experts date the fabrication of the damask in the beginning of the XVIth Century or earlier.

Unfortunately competent art critics, who have seen the picture and who have seemed one and all to feel its charm, have not been disposed to pronounce a definite judgment upon it, no doubt for fear of seeming to depreciate the Sistine Madonna. From the point of view of the history of Art all must recognise the importance of this picture in relation to the Sistine Madonna, whether "The Assumption" be a contemporary copy, a replica or the original of the Sistine Madonna.

In default of a definite verdict on the part of experts, I venture, though an amateur, in all modesty to investigate in some measure the history of the Sistine Madonna.

From the art critics' point of view, the present situation of the two pictures is not of the smallest significance: their position as regards the Cinquecento alone—the great Century of Art—must be taken into consideration. At that time our Assomptione was in the Este 'Capella in Corte' at Ferrara (see plan of Ferrara 1597); the Sistine Madonna—though how long it had been there is unknown—in San Sisto at Piacenza.

Giorgio Vasari of Arezzo (born 1512 died 1574) was the first to state what is now inscribed in golden letters on its frame: (Rafaello) "fece ai Monaci neri di San Sisto "in Piacenza la tavola dell'altar Maggiore dentrovi la nostra Donna con San Sisto e "Santa Barbara, cosa veramente rarissima e singolare," (1550 and subsequent editions). (For the Black Friars of San Sisto in Piacenza, the Benedictine monks from Monte Cassino, Raphael painted a panel picture for the high altar of their church: the subject of this picture is the Virgin with St. Sixtus and Sta. Barbara, a singularly beautiful work.) This statement is so positive that its correctness has seldom been questioned. It is true that no confirmation of it is to hand in the shape of letters, catalogues, bills, contracts or other notices. Art critics have been compelled in numbers of cases to modify Vasari's statements, inasmuch as he appears, except with regard to the Florentine school, to have been able to draw on no authentic sources for his materials.



Moreover, writers on art cannot explain how it was that in 1514 or later Raphael either would or could paint for Benedictine monks in "Lombardia" a work of this character, and execute it entirely with his own hand. The influence of some Cardinal might, it is true, account for this. But from 1515 the church in Piacenza was under the archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Hypolit, brother of Alfonso I of Este. The Benedictine Friars of Monte Cassino were not rich and powerful, as they became afterwards, about 1540—1550, that is to say in Vasari's time. (Tosti storia della Badia di Monte Cassino III, page 249 sqq). Who can have given Vasari this information? Very probably the friends to whom he entrusted his book to revise, correct, and transcribe (1547—1549): that is to say the learned Benedictine monks of Camaldoli, Oliveto and Monte Cassino. (Vasari edition Lemonier I, page 15 sqq). If Vasari had seen the picture before 1540 when he paid his last visit to North Italy (Lombardia), I venture humbly to point out that he would have framed his statement differently: he would not have used the word "tavola" (panel picture), for it is well known that the Sistine Madonna is painted on coarse canvas with two (cross) seams. Again, he would not have said "for the High Altar," as this was not consecrated till January 1st 1544, 24 years after Raphael's death, in presence of Uberto Gambara, brother of the poetess Veronica Gambara, Cardinal-Legate in Piacenza since 1540, as is stated in the inscription on the High altar itself (see plate X). Again Vasari would not have forgotten the Child-Christ, and the two angels at the Virgin's feet; nor would he have omitted to describe the composition and style of the picture. His words as we have them sound more like a second hand statement than the result of his own observation. If we consult Passero's "Monasterio di San Sisto" 1593, which usually takes into account all old documents bearing on the subject, we are by no means sure what progress had been made during Raphael's lifetime in the building of the church above ground (see plate), which had been begun in 1502. Poggiali (1760) maintains indeed that documents enable him with confidence to place the completion in 1512. It evidently referred to the lower church only. Why then was it not till 1544 that the relics were transported to the new upper Church? According to the religious feeling of that time relics were more essential to a Church than an altar-piece: one would therefore expect to find them in the Church at an earlier date than a work of art. With reference to the building of the convent of San Sisto there are no documents forthcoming which date from the first third of the XVIth century. I have been assured by several archivists in Piacenza, that, during the war in 1800, the entire archives were transported in a cart to the private dwelling house of the Guglieri family in Piacenza. Since then they have disappeared, and only a few single



documents come to light. In 1521 when the French troops withdrew they appear to have sacked the convent (Addizione alla cronaca del Guarini). Till 1512 the town of Piacenza belonged to the Duke of Milan, till 1515 with some interruptions to the Pope, till 1521 to the French, and afterwards to various potentates. It is hardly to be supposed that anywhere in Piacenza, far less in any convent, great wealth and treasures of art could have been accumulated, so that the "Black Friars" could in 1512 have given Raphael a commission, and the statement "fece ai monaci neri" (painted for the Black Friars) be confirmed. Far different was the position of Duke Alfonso I! Over and over again, with his store of golden coin, he could out-bid Emperor, Pope and King of France; he was known to be the richest prince of his day: and his court was the resort of poets and painters such as Ariosto, Titian, Dossi, Pordenone, Garofalo, and others.

It is not till the time of Cardinal Gambara, 1540—44, that increased activity in building seems to have sprung up in Piacenza; when under Paul III he had to make it into a Princely Residence for the Farnese family. San Sisto was situated close to the Castello, afterwards the Palazzo Farnese, and became the Royal Church (Farnese monument).

**Vasari's statement, that the Sistine Madonna was brought to Piacenza in Raphael's lifetime, *i.e.* before 1520, does not command assent, indeed it seems impossible to reconcile with known facts.**

But perhaps the assertion may be made that the picture was a present to Pope Paul III. On this point we may get some guidance from the "Assomptione" and its home.

In March 1543 Pope Paul III, attended by several Cardinals, travelled to Piacenza to meet the Emperor Charles V. Till the latter should arrive at Bologna, the Pope went on the urgent invitation of Duke Hercole II of Este to Ferrara, where he met with a most brilliant reception. No work of art which was to be found in Ferrara was kept in the back ground. While Raphael was still living, Paul III must have been perfectly familiar with his works. What must have been his feelings when he found himself once more in presence of one of that great painter's works of which all trace in Rome had long been lost! Is it presumptuous to suggest that the Duke may have promised a rich gift to his illustrious guest? (compare Alberi Relazione, VI serie, tom. 3, page 110). What more precious gift could the Pope have requested from his vassal than a work of the imperishable Sanzio? Assuming this was the case, where should the Duke have sent it to but to Piacenza, to the nearest Cardinal-Legate, the brother of the gifted Veronica Gambara? Such gifts often appear in



Vasari's "Lives." As a rule, however, the giver contented himself with going through the form of giving, and sent merely a copy of the picture. So, for example, this same Duke of Ferrara, Hercole II, sent to Francis I King of France, a copy by Gerolamo da Carpi as a genuine Titian. As, however, the Sistine Madonna was too large to be transported to Rome, or for other reasons, it remained in the above-mentioned Royal Church in Piacenza; with all the more appropriateness in that the relics preserved in San Sisto are connected with Sta. Barbara.

That the "Black Friars" received the copy as a genuine Raphael and endeavoured to spread abroad the fame of their church is very probable. "Who then is the author of the copy?" it may be asked. None other, in my humble opinion, than the typical Eclectic of the Italian Cinque-cento, Gerolamo da Carpi (born 1501, died 1556, or, according to Cittadella, 1568) who was at the time Court painter at Ferrara.

In the year 1543 in particular he executed some paintings, witness his account in *Munizione Libro Conto generale de la Munizione de le fabriche y y y 1544*: "Mastro Gerolamino da Carpi dipintore di havere adi 26 zenaro Lire cento cinque marchesine per lui de la spesa de corte per sua mercede de havere dipinto più volte diversi quadri in più lochj in corte per il Sig<sup>r</sup> nostro Ill<sup>mo</sup> come al m<sup>le</sup> y y y C<sup>te</sup> q aparo a la ditta spesa in questo C<sup>te</sup> 5" . . . . . R. Archivio di Stato di Modena. (Master Gerolamo da Carpi, painter, is due the sum of 105 Lire on 26 January, in payment for work done for the court: as he has frequently painted several pictures in different parts of the palace for our most illustrious Lord, as appears in the day-book y y y Cento q, &c.).

It is, indeed, to be regretted that no more light can be shed on the identification of these "diversi quadri in più lochj in corte".

Although the picture that was retained, the "Sensione" of Bastiano Filippi (1586—88), was attributed to Gerolamo da Carpi, yet it must be obvious that a copy of the picture, and not the original was sent. Moreover the "Assomptione" does not show any trace of Gerolamo's style.

On the other hand, it is scarcely conceivable that in the XVIth century the Dukes of Ferrara, Alfonso I and Hercules II, would have condescended to procure a copy from a small convent of whatever antiquity. There are absolutely no grounds for such a supposition.

In and after 1516 Alfonso of Este had received no less than three of the Cartoons of Raphael's greatest work, and had been brought into personal relations with him as early as 1512 (see Campori *Notizie inedite di Raffaello*).



But I am prepared to bring forward further evidence in support of my contention that the Sistine Madonna is a Gerolamo da Carpi, and our "Assomptione" the original.

I mean that which in matters artistic surpasses all other evidence in cogency, that of the pictures themselves.

It has been the lot of many great men, whose services have entitled them to a place in the world's history, to meet with indifference or even persecution at the hands of their contemporaries. This was not the case with Raphael. It is well known that he was held in high esteem by the greatest dignitaries of his day, the princes of Italy and of all Europe. It is, however, particularly pleasant to us to learn from his biography that the great painter of Urbino was during his own life-time appreciated by none more thoroughly than by his brothers of the brush.

At the end of the nineteenth century the star of the immortal master has not yet begun to pale. His splendid works, and above all his countless pictures of the Virgin, are still studied with ever-growing interest. Historians and lovers of art busy themselves with the utmost zeal in investigating the origin of Raphael's creations, and in collecting all materials bearing on the subject, which in the dearth of contemporary records form the only basis on which theories can rest. The chief materials, of course are furnished by the sketches and the paintings themselves.

The Madonna of San Sisto above all, in which Raphael reached the zenith of his art, is still held to be the pearl of the Dresden Gallery: and this fact affords the more justification for setting on foot the most searching investigation into the origin of this marvellous composition.







The above remarks and enquiries into the history of the two pictures will, I feel sure, cause many lovers of art and admirers of Raphael to hope that the Administration of the Dresden Gallery may be induced to meet half way my proposal for exhibiting the "Assomptione" and the "Sistine" side by side. An opportunity would thus be afforded of examining them both simultaneously and comparing them fairly. In no other way would it be possible for competent art critics to pronounce an unprejudiced and conclusive verdict.

In May 1892 Professor Woermann, Director of the Royal Picture Gallery at Dresden, was good enough to assent to a proposal made by me that the pictures should be exhibited together. On that occasion his assent took the form of a permission to put the pictures side by side for "**one hour**," and the public were not to be admitted.

Nothing however would be gained by exhibiting them side by side, unless a longer space of time were granted, and a large number of art-critics and admirers of Raphael were invited to examine the two works at their leisure. If the Directors of the Dresden Gallery accede to my proposal they will not merely earn the gratitude of all interested in art, but will by their action remove the possibility of any uncharitable construction being put upon their refusal.

I have intentionally refrained from entering either generally or in detail upon the question of the correspondences or the differences between the two pictures. Like most of Raphael's creations both have had to undergo restoration and retouching. My purpose will be best served if the discussion of these important points is postponed till



the pictures are placed side by side, that critics may express their opinion, be it what it may, without prejudice. That differences exist is clear from the comparison of the photogravures, although by themselves these do not afford sufficient grounds on which to base a conclusive verdict.

It will, I think, be conceded by any one who weighs impartially the actual conditions of the problem, that it is only reasonable to ask, that all possible light may promptly be shed upon it.

While I am prepared to exhibit the "Assomptione" side by side with the "Sistine Madonna", it is my hope that the art world will take such an interest in the question as to justify the comparison of the two pictures.

Everyone has his own canons of criticism to guide him in his estimate of works of art.

If I may be allowed to mention those which form my own standpoint, I would ask that the pictures be examined with reference to the composition, the deep spirituality of the persons represented, correctness of drawing in details, distribution of light and shade, and harmony of colour.

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The Sistine Madonna admittedly differs from Raphael's usual manner: hitherto the universally accepted explanation has been, that Raphael transferred to canvas a sudden inspiration "entirely with his own hand." The size and the technique of the painting are arguments against this theory. He never painted in the style of Franz Hals or in the modern so-called realistic manner, but was as all know the direct product of the Quattrocento. It is, moreover, quite beyond credence that in his Roman period he could have completed so large a picture "entirely with his own hand" without the aid of his pupils: he had not the time (Campori *Notizie inedite di Raffaello*).

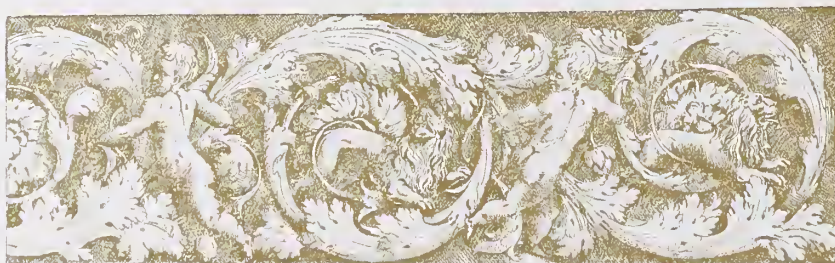
It is well known that the Sistine Madonna is painted on coarse canvas with two cross seams. Different writers have repeatedly raised the question why Raphael, contrary to his usual practice, made use of canvas for this picture. In answer the large size of the picture has been put forward: also the fact that it was probably intended originally to be used as a Church-banner or carried in procession. This assumption is, however, combated by some authors, though without cogent arguments.



When we reflect with what conscientiousness, nay scrupulosity, Raphael set about all his works, and for this reason painted by far the greater number of his altar-pieces on wood; that he supervised with extreme care all the productions of his pupils; that he took care to employ none but skilled colour-grinders, brush-cleaners &c., whose work was under his own constant control; it cannot but strike us as remarkable that he should have painted the Sistine Madonna on **coarse** canvas with **two cross seams**, although no other genuine Raphael exists that is painted on more than one single piece of canvas.

In comparing the two pictures, special attention should be given to the fact that our "Assomptione" is painted on **one** piece of **damask linen**, the finest and strongest texture that could be produced; professional experts have without hesitation fixed the date of its fabrication in the end of the XVth century, or the beginning of the XVIth. In these circumstances will not every unprejudiced enquirer be forced involuntarily to the conviction that it is far more probable that some copyist should have made use of these pieces of coarse canvas stitched together, than that this should have been done by the conscientious creator of this all-important work?

Many of my readers may be surprised that I have not in this book reproduced either Braun's photograph, Schurig's drawing, or one of the splendid engravings through which the Sistine Madonna has become so widely known: it is for the simple reason that I find the older photograph of the Photographic Society in Berlin agrees most closely with the picture itself. For engravers especially it is extremely difficult to faithfully reproduce the exact expression and the precise outlines of a picture which has undergone restoration and over-painting more or less at **four** different times (Woermann). Moreover, the glass through which the Sistine Madonna is seen, hides a number of flaws in the picture.



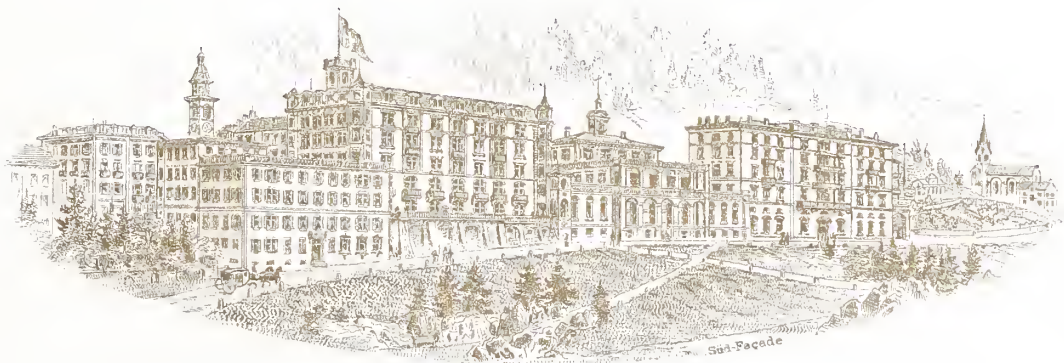


Questions of art, where such important works are concerned, must be dealt with in a spirit which can rise superior to patriotic prepossessions: and I much hope that when once the two pictures are placed side by side we may obtain an expression of opinion from the largest possible number of connoisseurs and experts. Whatever be the verdict they pronounce, I shall be satisfied.

“Vox populi vox Dei”.

St. Moritz, Engadine, 1893.

Caspar Badrutt.



Engadinerkulkulm.





Dessin des Damastes, auf welchem die Assomptione gemalt wurde





# THE SISTINE MADONNA at Dresden.

PHOTOGRAVURE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, BERLIN.



PROF. KARL WERMANN in his catalogue of the Dresden Gallery 1887 writes: "painted on canvas: height 8 ft. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches, breadth 6 ft. 5 $\frac{1}{4}$  in. approximately; purchased in 1753 through the painter Carlo Cesare Giovanini for 20,000 Ducats (some £ 9000), from the church of San Sisto at Piacenza. According to Vasari Raphael painted the picture for the High Altar of this church. It is supposed to have hung where a copy of it hangs now: behind the High Altar, between the end windows of the choir."



## ASSOMPTIONE

at St. Moritz.

PHOTOGRAVURE BY DR. E. ALBERT &amp; Co., MUNICH.



The name ASSOMPTIONE may be interpreted in different ways. The most obvious is the Ascension of the Madonna. In this case the ledge which appears in the Sistine Madonna, and has been copied from it into the Assomptione must represent the threshold of the grave or of Earth. Or again the name Assomptione may refer to the Festival at which the picture was first seen in public, the coronation of Leo X, on 11th April 1513, and the restoration of Alfonso I, Duke of Ferrara, to his ducal rights. Thus that day was known in Ferrara at that time as "l'assomptione"—: the assumption of the Pontificate by Leo X, and of the ducal robes by Alfonso I.











# DETAIL OF THE SISTINE MADONNA



COPY OF AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN FROM THE ORIGINAL PICTURE BY THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY  
OF BERLIN.

DETAIL OF THE ASSOMPTIONE



PHOTOGRAVURE BY BRAUN, CLEMENT & Co., DORNACH.











# THE ASSUMPTIONE

before it was cleaned in 1887.

Report of A. SESAR, picture restorer, AUGSBURG.



The picture arrived in a very damaged condition. It was torn on all sides, especially at top and bottom. In the middle two strips  $1\frac{1}{2}$ —2 inches in breadth were torn out, from the Virgin's blue robe and the clouds. Besides these there were various holes in the picture. All these injuries had been repaired by pasting behind them patches of canvas of various sizes and ages. Almost the whole of the Virgin's blue robe had been repainted, as well as large portions of the clouds, and—to hide traces of the tear at the bottom of the picture—the heads of the two angels and the upper part of the arms of one.

The picture is painted on damask, of a simple but beautiful design. This was partly rotten, but was enabled still to hold together owing to the priming being laid upon it. The difficulty of removing traces of the repainting and the varnish adhering to the original surface, was caused by their extreme age: for the former had become perfectly dry, so that the Original below could be seen shining through the subsequent painting! This is distinctly visible in the angels heads in the photograph taken before the cleaning . . . . As only indispensable additions of missing parts were to be undertaken, the existing original colour remained untouched: the best evidence of this is afforded by the delicate cracks, a characteristic mark of age, and to some extent by the deepening of the tints: also for example the subsequent painting on St. Sixtus' cope, where it borders on the Virgin's blue robe. *To complete the picture I was obliged to add about  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches at the top,  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches at the bottom, nearly 2 inches on the side of the Pope, and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches on the side of Sta. Barbara.* The main point, in which lies the chief value of the picture, is that all important parts of it had been preserved almost intact, excepting the hands of one of the angels and part of the hands of the other. *The head of every single figure has been preserved intact, the whole of the Christ-Child, the upper part of the body and hands of the Virgin, the entire figures of Sta. Barbara and of the Pope, with the exception, in the case of the latter, of a few cracks and slight injuries, and, as mentioned above, the missing parts on the outer edge of the picture.*

The additions were therefore mainly in trifling details. The undamaged portions, when freed from dirt and partial repainting, were restored by cleaning to their pristine brightness and freshness of colouring. The consciousness of having preserved to the world a masterpiece of the highest rank, by my conscientious and careful work more than outweighs my trouble and anxiety.

AUGSBURG, 25th. November 1887.

(Signed) A. SESAR.

Picture restorer.

# ASSOMPTIONE

before cleaning.



PHOTOGRAPH BY DR. E. ALBERT & CO. FROM A NEGATIVE OF HOFLE, AUGSBURG.



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# PLAN OF PIACENZA

1570

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF E. FIORENTINI, PARMA.



40 Mon. di S. Bernab. 50 Palaz. de' Signori 69 Santo Saluatori 79 Santo Protho  
 41 Mon. di S. Hieronim. 51 Palaz. de' Scotti 70 Santa M. di Galim. 80 Santo Gerolamo  
 42 Porta di S. Lazzaro 52 Piazza del borgo 71 Santa M. delli pagani 81 San Michele  
 43 Porta di S. Raimondo 53 Piazza grande 72 Santa M. delli Spetoli 82 Naz. di S. Maria  
 44 Porta di S. Leonardo 54 Piazza del D. 63 Santo Nazario 73 Santo Martino in fore 83 S. di Fazio  
 45 Porta di S. Orsello 55 Chiesa e Farnese 64 Santo Eustachio 74 Santa Lucia 84 S. di S. Maria  
 46 Porta di S. Rocco 56 Santa Agnese 65 Santa M. delli Angeli 75 Santa Silvestro 85 S. di S. Maria  
 47 Palaz. di Madama 57 Santa Vincenza 66 S. Croce portano 76 Santa Fina 86 S. di S. Maria  
 48 Palaz. di S. Antonio 58 Santa Maria 67 S. N. delli case 77 Santa Maria 87 S. di S. Maria  
 49 Palaz. de' PART OF A PLAN OF PIACENZA, drawn by Mateo Florini (the elder) about 1570. On the right,

near the somewhat idealised Palazzo Farnese (also called Palazzo Madama, as it was begun by Margaret of Austria, natural daughter of Charles V and mother of the then Duke Alessandro) stands the Monastery of San Sisto. At that time the choir still ended in a semicircular apse, and was considerably lower than the modern rectangular choir. The church did not then possess the anterior nave, and the cupola was of a different shape to the present one. The monastery buildings were small, but sufficient for the hitherto insignificant number of "Black Friars".

All its dimensions were smaller. A scale can only show the corner chapel and the right side of the apse. Could Raphael have supposed that his great picture was destined for a small, old, badly lighted church like this?

This plan, and another by Henricus von Schoel are to be found in the Public Library of Piacenza. Schoel's plan is some 20 years later than that of Florini. The church and the monastery had in the meantime become larger.



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PART OF A PLAN OF PIACENZA, drawn by Marco Florini (the elder) about 1570. On the right, near the somewhat idealised Palazzo Farnese (also called Palazzo Madama, as it was begun by Margaret of Austria, natural daughter of Charles V and mother of the then Duke Alessandro) stands the Monastery of San Sisto. At that time the choir still ended in a semicircular apse, and was considerably lower than the modern rectangular choir. The church did not then possess the anterior nave, and the cupola was of a different shape to the present one. The monastery buildings were small, but sufficient for the hitherto insignificant number of "Black Friars". All its dimensions were smaller. A scale can only show the corner chapel and the right side of the apse. Could Raphael have supposed that his great picture was destined for a small, old, badly lighted church like this? This plan, and another by Heinrich von Schöel are to be found in the Public Library of Piacenza. Schöel's plan is some 20 years later than that of Florini. The church and the monastery had in the meantime become larger.





40 Monast. di S. Bernaba.	50 Palaz. de' Sacerdini	59 Santo Salvatore	69 Santa M. in suffredo.	79 Santo Probasio.
41 Monast. di S. Hieronimo.	51 Palaz. de' Scotti.	60 Santa M. di Torric.	70 Santa M. di Gallinetta.	80 Santo Geruasio.
42 Porta di S. Lazzaro.	52 Piazza del borgo	61 Santo Ambrosio	71 Santa M. delli pagani.	81 Santo Michele.
43 Porta di S. Raimondo.	53 Piazza grada.	62 Santa Agnesa	72 Santa M. delli Spioni.	82 S. Nazario sopra mare.
44 Porta di stralenta.	54 Piazza del Domo.	63 Santo Nazaretto.	73 Santo Martino in foro.	83 Santo Faustino.
45 Porta di Borghetto.	Chiese e Parrocchie	64 Santo Eustachio.	74 Santa Fede.	84 Santo Donnino.
46 Porta di Fodesta.	55 Santo Antonino.	65 Santa M. dell'Ang.	75 Santo Silvestro.	85 Santo Ilario.
47 Palaz. di madama.	56 Santo Vincentio.	66 S. Croce portano.	76 Santo Pietro in foro.	86 S. Martino in borgo.
48 Palaz. di' commun.	57 Santo Stefano.	67 S. Nic. dell. casse.	77 Santo Giuliano.	87 Santa M. in Cortina.
49 Palaz. de' Landi.	58 Santo Paolo.	68 S. Maria Trinita.	78 Santa Apollonia.	88 Santo Alessandro.







PART OF A PLAN OF THE TOWN OF PIACENZA  
with San Sisto and the Cittadella.

1 : 5000.



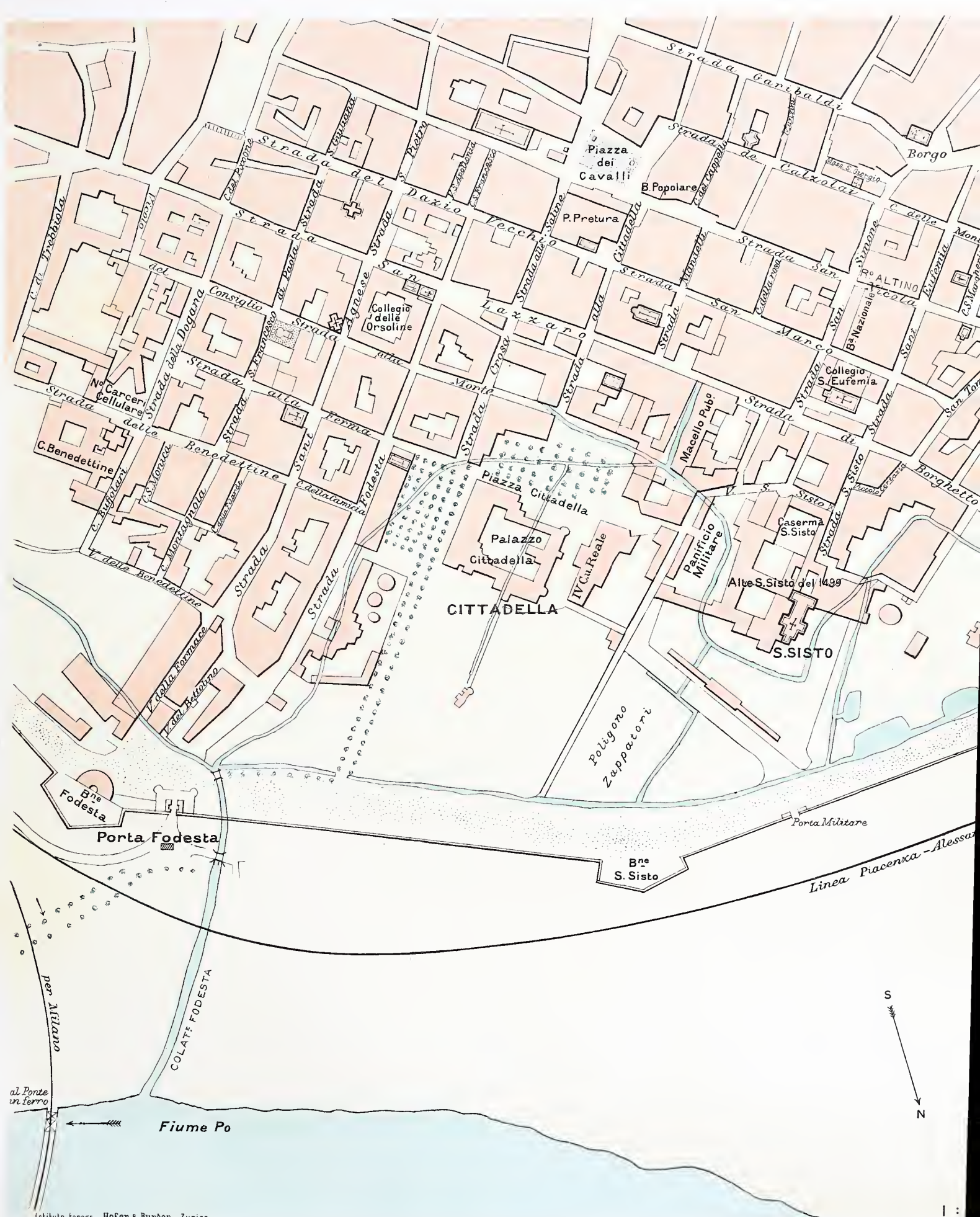
Survey of 1890.



with San Sisto and the Cittadella.

1 : 5000.









# INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF SAN SISTO at Piacenza.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY E. FIORENTINI.



The original small church and crypt were built in the ninth century. Founded by Queen Engelbert. The church seems to have been demolished in 1499—1502, and an entirely new building erected: in the course of the XVIth century it was gradually enlarged till it attained its present dimensions as shown in the picture. The intarsiatura work of the stalls in the choir, immediately in front of a copy of the Sistine Madonna by Avanzini, was begun in 1576 by Maestro Bartolomeo da Busseto. The execution of the façade of the church was entrusted to Maestro Bartolo Roccus and three other Maestri of Piacenza.

In 1598 on January 3rd, and March 28th "Vitruvio Bragadini Veneziano," gilder, and "Bernardino Storno," mason, undertook to move into a new position and gild the organ (on the left side of the photograph), also to gild the cantoria (singers' gallery) opposite, and other parts of the church. The Master-mason was to make alterations in several chapels.

On October 4th 1600 two large pictures, to cost 400 ducatoons, were ordered of the well-known painter Procacini of Milan. But by 1603 neither of these had been delivered, although the painter had received considerable payments on account: and the "Black Friars" (who, it is pretended had had Raphael in their service some ninety years before) were obliged to content themselves with a single picture of Procacini, who was but a very mediocre Milanese painter.

In 1697 the then Prior ordered from Gio. Sete for 2200 lire, current money, the great frame for the Sistine Madonna, which was still in the same position ("per la cornice che deve fare alla Beatissima Vergine quadro che resta nel Coro di San Sisto di Piacenza, opera di Raffaello d' Urbino").

# INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF SAN SISTO

at Piacenza.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY E. FIORENTINI.

VerGINE quadro che resta nel Coro di San Sisto di Piacenza, opera di Raffaello d' Urbino".  
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# THE HIGH ALTAR

in the Church of San Sisto at Piacenza.



The present inscription is:—

“The body of Pope Sixtus II, Martyr and Saint, was brought here from Rome under Pope John VIII; subsequently, on October 9th, 1185, it was moved from the lower to the upper church: in 1499, when the church was falling into ruins through age, it was placed in the Sacristy; and transferred to this spot by the Cardinal-Legate, Ubertus Gambara, in 1544, under Pope Paul III. Peregrinus of Modena being Abbot.”

In the year 1576 the inscriptions on the Altar ran as follows (Passero pp. 33, 34).

I. on the side facing the “Santuario”:—

“Paulo III. Pont. Max. Regnante Ubertus Gambara Card. Legatus beatissimi Xisti Papae et Martyris corpus sacrario in quo tēplo vetustate collapsio fuerat ad tempus repositum sub hoc iterum condidit maximo civitatis concursu ac devotione D. Peregrino Mutinensi Abbate anno Domini 1544 calendis Januariis”.

[“The body of the most blessed Sistus, Pope and Martyr, which had been placed for a time in the Sacristy when the church had fallen into ruins through age, was restored to its former position under this altar in the reign of Pope Paul III by the Cardinal-Legate, Ubertus Gambara, and the altar was consecrated in the presence of a very large number of citizens on January 1st. 1544, Peregrinus of Modena being Abbot”.]

II. on the side facing the choir:—

“Divi Sisti II Papae et Martyris quod mortale fuit ob Christi fidē gladio Decius Caesar extinxit Ludovicus II Imp. Roma huc transtulit Paulus de Aretio Card. Episcopus Placen et Caesarius Abbas novissime ampliato templo hic repo. Octavio Farnesio et Alexandro filio Ducibus max. pop. Plac. frequentia ac pietate 1576 VI Id. Aprilis”.

[“Decius Caesar slew with the sword the blessed Sistus II, Pope and Martyr, for his faith in Christ: The Emperor Ludovicus II brought his body from Rome to this place: immediately after the enlargement of the church it was replaced here, on April 8th 1576, by Paulus of Arezzo, Cardinal Bishop of Piacenza, and Caesarius, abbot: the ceremony being attended by a large concourse of the citizens of Piacenza”.]

These inscriptions are the oldest documents referring to the new upper church at Piacenza: they establish 1544, the year the relics were transferred to it, as the date of the consecration of the High altar: and 1576 as the date of the dedication of the new church.





# THE HIGH ALTAR

in the Church of San Sisto at Piacenza.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY E. FIORENTINI.



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The body of Pope Sixtus II Martyr and Saint, was brought here from Rome under Pope Pius IV. in 1563, on October 9th. 1583, it was moved from the lower to the upper church: in 1627, when the church was falling into ruins through age, it was placed in the Sacristy; and transferred to the present place by the Cardinal-Legate, Ubertus Gambara, in 1544, under Pope Paul III. Peregrinus of

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 monasterium ad hunc templū hic repo. Octavio Farnesio et Alexandro filio Ducibus max. pop. Plac. frequentia  
 pignora sunt. 1679. 17. Id. Aprilis".*

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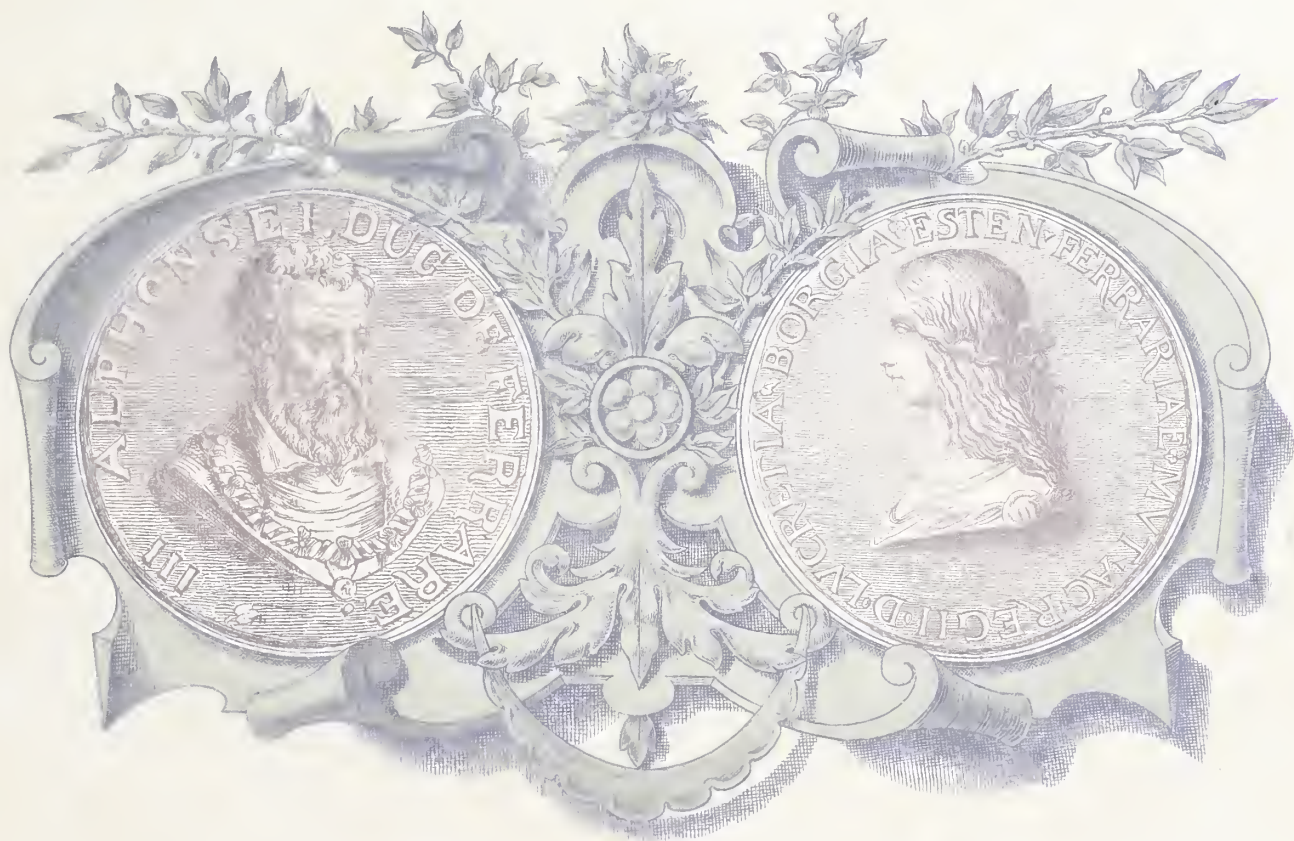
These inscriptions are the oldest documents referring to the new upper church at Piacenza: the oldest being 1144, the year the relics were transferred to it, as the date of the consecration of the High Church is the date of the dedication of the new church.







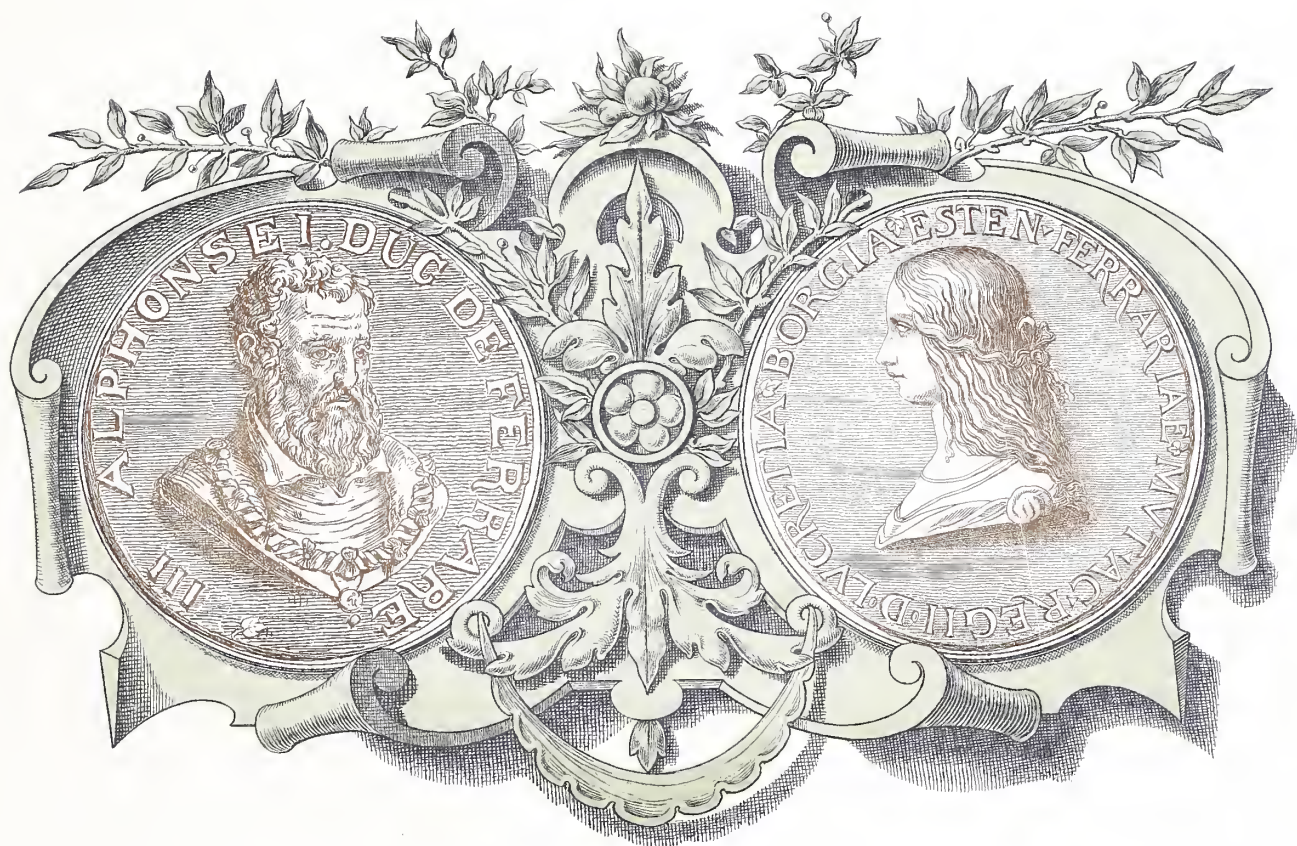




ALFONSO I, Duke of Ferrara, son of Hercules I, Duke of Ferrara, and of a daughter of the King of Naples, famous both as a general and a statesman, married as his second wife LUCREZIA BORGIA, became in 1509 Gonfaloniere (Banner-bearer) of the Roman Church, and in this capacity went again to Rome in 1513 for the coronation of Pope Leo X. Lucrezia Borgia died in 1519 and Alfonso I in 1534.

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KINDLY CONTRIBUTED BY PROFESSOR F. BORGATI OF FERRARA, AFTER HIS INVESTIGATIONS IN FERRARA  
AND MODENA.

Since N. Cittadella's investigations the search for a chapel in a courtyard within the Castle itself has been fruitless. Even Venturi does not venture to identify the different chapels used by the dynasty which held its court at Ferrara for so many centuries. For several reasons I believe that the site in question, the position of the "Capella in Corte", is identical with that of the Chiesa Nuova (San Maurelio) now fallen into ruins.

Two sides of the chapel abutted on courtyards, the inner one being also called the Duchess' garden. At the narrow end of the chapel, facing the present courtyard, on which later buildings have unfortunately encroached, is to be found the magnificent Renaissance door-way erected by Hercole II soon after 1580. About the chapel itself I quote from "Genealogia Estense di Mario Equicola" e continuazione." "1476 l'illtssmo S. D. Hercole fece fare la chiesa S. Maria di Corte dove l'è et adi 2 di Febrajo gli fu detta la Messa." "1589 fu similmente finito la fabrica della Capella del Ducal Cortile nella quale S A fece fabricare per comodità dell Illmo Signore e sua famiglia et anco per abellirla". (In 1476 Duke Hercules I had the church of S. Maria di Corte built where it now stands, and on February 2nd mass was celebrated there. In 1589 the building of the chapel in the Ducal courtyard was also completed which His Highness had built (or rather restored) for the convenience of his Serene Highness and family, and also to add to the beauty of the structure. Further, in Pigna's "Sollennissimi funerali nella capella del gran cortile contiguo alla piazza detta il Cortile," are described the royal funerals in the chapel of the Great Courtyard adjoining the square called the Cortile.

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